



**Mustafa Salahuddin, President and Business Agent
Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1336**

**SB 938 An Act Concerning Unemployment Benefits for Striking Workers
Joint Committee on Labor and Public Employees**

February 7, 2023

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1336, which represents school bus drivers in Connecticut, strongly supports SB 938, which allows striking workers to collect unemployment benefits. Over my term as president of Local 1336, I am grateful to have been able build a healthy working relationship and bargain fair contracts with the private school bus operators for whom my members work.

But I know all too well that private contractors can change, and there may come a time when our members decide to strike to ensure they are compensated for the vital work they do. It is important to underscore for the members of this Committee that striking is a last resort for union members. Union members only decide to do so when the employer has committed unfair labor practices or the employer's refuses to bargain in good faith to reach a fair and equitable agreement for its employees.

Senate Bill 938 helps ensure that the right to strike, an essential right delineated in Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act, is supported, not undermined. By exempting workers on strike from unemployment benefits, the state of Connecticut strengthens the hands of employers who refuse to play fair. This legislation would level the playing field and mitigate the financial strain on striking workers and the families they support.

ATU Local 1336 fully supports Senate Bill 938. We urge the committee to advance this important bill so that our members know that the state of Connecticut has their backs. Thank you.